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ABSTRACT

This document highlights the policy and advocacy positions that the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) will assume in upcoming legislative and regulatory processes. Member institutions will find these policies predictive of advocacy efforts on their behalf; policymakers will find positions predicated on the needs of students. Among the premises on which the agenda is based is that higher education is a common good that serves the interests of society and provides individual benefits. State colleges and universities are committed to providing access to quality undergraduate and graduate programs. To this end, policies are outlined for: (1) various aspects of student financial aid; (2) federal and state tax policies; (3) teacher preparation, development, and support; (4) international program opportunities for students, faculty, and administrators; (5) federal and state issues related to science, research, and information technology; (6) federal and state issues related to access and inclusion; (7) economic and workforce development; and (8) governance. (SLD)

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Public Policy Agenda

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FROM AASCU'S PRESIDENT

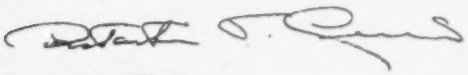
Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to present to you the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' (AASCU) *2001 Public Policy Agenda.* At regular intervals, AASCU revisits its guiding philosophy and priorities, and defines the principles that will shape its advocacy efforts on behalf of public higher education at both the state and federal levels. These principles comprise the *2001 Public Policy Agenda.*

For member institutions, this document will be predictive and reflective of our advocacy efforts on your behalf. We also hope that it will serve as a ready guide and reference for your own advocacy efforts. For federal and state policymakers, this document highlights the policy and advocacy positions that AASCU will assume in upcoming legislative and regulatory processes. These positions will be predicated foremost on meeting the needs of the nation's students.

Both the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the Hispanic Association of College and Universities (HACU) have endorsed AASCU's *2001 Public Policy Agenda.* I am pleased to include letters of support from their respective presidents.

Sincerely,



Constantine W. Curris
President

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ENDORSEMENT FROM NASULGC

NASULGC National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

January 10, 2001

Dr. Constantine W. Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges
and Universities
1307 New York Avenue, NW, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dena:

I am pleased to announce NASULGC's support of AASCU's 2001 *Public Policy Agenda*.

As a sister association in advancing the work of public colleges and universities, this document delineates the key policy issues we must monitor and advocate around in the coming year. Foremost among these are student financial aid, tax policy, and teacher preparation.

Best of luck as you work to advance these priorities, and public higher education, in the months ahead. We stand ready to assist you in these efforts.

Cordially,

C. Peter Magrath
President

CPM/pm

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HACU

January 5, 2001

Dr. Constantine W. "Dino" Curris
President
American Association of State Colleges & Universities
1307 New York Avenue, NW
Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dino:

I appreciate receiving an advance copy of AASCU's *2001 Public Policy Agenda*, and am pleased to inform you that the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) supports this Agenda.

As evident from this document, AASCU and HACU share some important higher education advocacy priorities, including targeting federal and state aid to needy students and higher education access and inclusion. The *2001 Public Policy Agenda* provides ready guidelines for advancing these and other public higher education priorities.

Thank you for your leadership role in identifying and disseminating AASCU's advocacy priorities through the *2001 Public Policy Agenda*. We look forward to partnering with you on issues of shared concern in the year ahead.

Cordially,

Antonio Flores

Antonio R. Flores
President & CEO

ARF/gb

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INTRODUCTION

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) is comprised of more than 430 public colleges, universities and systems of public higher education located throughout the United States and its territories. These institutions enroll more than three and a quarter million students, representing more than half of all students enrolled in public four-year institutions. In addition, AASCU members award 37 percent of the nation's bachelor's degrees, 28 percent of its master's degrees, and 8 percent of all doctorates. AASCU member institutions educate a majority of the nation's undergraduate students who are preparing for a career in teaching.

In the year 2001 and beyond, AASCU will focus on shaping federal and state higher education policy by advocating for the distinctive attributes and contributions of its member institutions. During the year ahead, AASCU will extend its advocacy efforts to a wider array of federal agencies whose policy and funding decisions affect member institutions. At the same time, the Association will continue and expand its monitoring of state higher education policy issues, and will direct advocacy efforts, selectively determined, to those issues.

One of AASCU's primary functions in the policy process is to facilitate communication between its members and policymakers. At the federal level, AASCU acts both in collaboration with and on behalf of its members in working with Congress and the executive branch. AASCU members are kept apprised of actions in Washington, and their views and concerns are clearly communicated in the nation's capital. At the state level, AASCU carefully monitors developing policy trends, promoting policies that advance the principles espoused by the membership and criticizing policies inimical to those principles. AASCU's policy statement regarding state use of merit-based student aid is one example of this activity.

The *2001 Public Policy Agenda* articulates AASCU's guiding principles in the creation, adoption, and implementation of higher education policy. This document is a ready reference for members of the academic community, federal and state governments, and other concerned parties.

AASCU's policy positions are founded on an uncompromising commitment to support and advance the best interests of students. The *Public Policy Agenda*, therefore, is premised on the following ideals:

Higher education is a common good that serves the interests of society and provides individual benefits to students. While the individual gains from higher education are well-documented, the societal benefits are even greater. These include not only such tangible national dividends as enhanced national productivity and increased tax revenues but, even more profoundly, the fostering of an enlightened citizenry and greater social cohesion.

America's public higher education system is the embodiment of the nation's democratic ideals. State colleges and universities, by educating the majority of American students, exemplify this nation's unique efforts to provide access to higher education for as many of its citizens as possible.

State colleges and universities are committed to providing access to quality undergraduate and graduate programs, to serving as responsible stewards of the public's investment and trust, and to engaging meaningfully in the economic and social issues facing the communities and states of which they are a part. Additionally, these institutions are committed to providing access in settings that best meet the needs of their students, be they on-campus, off-campus, or online.

The burden of investing in public higher education should be borne in an equitable manner by all beneficiaries. Financing public higher education is the shared responsibility of students, families, and federal and state governments.

The primary function of federal financial aid is to guarantee access to higher education; this aid should be directed to the individual. Federal Pell Grants exemplify aid directed to the individual.

The primary purpose of state appropriations is to keep student tuition as low as possible to ensure access by resident students and to preserve programmatic quality and integrity; these appropriations should be directed to the institution. Low tuition is the most effective guarantee of access for all and is essential to a broadly educated citizenry.

Families should be encouraged and empowered to assume their share of, and save for, the higher education expenses of their children.

No American should be denied the opportunity to pursue higher education for lack of financial resources. Affordable public sector tuition and need-based federal aid are the two requisite ingredients of realizing this ideal.

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Student Financial Aid

Just over a half-century ago, American higher education was transformed by the GI Bill and its underlying premise of the federal government providing significant financial assistance to college students. Today, the student financial aid provided by federal and state governments stands as the most prominent symbol of the nation's commitment to higher education opportunity. Student financial aid programs at all levels of government enjoy broad bipartisan support. This commitment will be tested, however, by the further democratization of higher education, and particularly the influx of students from historically underrepresented populations. If the nation is to uphold its commitment to democracy through higher education opportunity, policies must be pursued that will advance that ideal.

Federal Issues

AASCU's oversight of federal student financial aid policy involves the authorization, appropriation and regulatory processes.

Authorization–The Higher Education Amendments of 1998, which reauthorized the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, renewed and expanded federal student financial assistance programs. These programs constitute the foundation of the long-standing federal commitment to assist students to finance a college education.

Appropriations–Grant and work study funds authorized by the HEA are part of the federal domestic discretionary budget. The creation and proper design of these programs will help students only if these programs receive adequate funding through the annual appropriations process.

Regulation–AASCU is actively involved in the negotiated rulemaking process, which the HEA now requires the U.S. Department of Education to use in developing all regulations for the student aid programs authorized by the HEA. AASCU regularly monitors federal regulations that might create individual inequities or unduly burden member institutions.

AASCU will continue to work with Congress, the administration, students, and other higher education groups to advance the following policy priorities through the proper venues.

Need-Based Grants and Work Study

Need-based student aid is AASCU's highest priority. Unlike federal loans, which are funded as entitlements, federal grant and work study dollars are discretionary budget items. Therefore, Congress appropriates funding for these items on an annual basis. AASCU believes that need-based aid programs, particularly Pell Grants, are the most efficient and effective delivery mechanisms for ensuring broad higher education access. In a time when competition for economic resources is intensifying and the benefits of higher education are increasingly being viewed in individual rather than societal terms, advocacy for need-based programs is more critical than ever.

Pell Grants

The Federal Pell Grant program is the cornerstone of the federal government's student financial assistance programs. The program provides need-based grant aid to millions of low- and moderate- income students, and, at a funding level of approximately $8 billion for fiscal year 2000, is the largest discretionary federal student aid program. For more than a quarter-century, Pell Grants have been instrumental in helping millions of Americans attend college.

Despite its proven track record of success, the Pell Grant program has not consistently received the appropriations necessary to fund the authorized increases in program funding nor the funding needs created by enrollment increases. Authorizing committees have typically used each reauthorization to increase the maximum allowable award levels, in the hope that appropriations committees would follow through with substantial additional funding. Although the Pell Grant program has received sizable funding increases over the past two years, these increases fail to make up for lost purchasing power and do not adequately address the large increases in the number of students newly eligible for Pell.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for significant increases in the Pell Grant maximum award as the most effective way to ensure access for the nation's neediest students and to address the growing imbalance between grants and loans as a percentage of total federal financial aid awarded.

Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)/ College Work Study (CWS)

The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and College Work Study (FWS) programs also provide essential need-based funding, enabling financial aid

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administrators to reduce loan burden and target grant and work assistance to the neediest students.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for significant increases in SEOG and CWS programs as essential elements of federal need-based aid.

Student Loans

Loan Limits and Debt Burdens

Over the more than three decades since the inception of the student loan program, both the number of borrowers and amounts borrowed have increased in an alarming manner.

Since federal loan programs are entitlements, no annual appropriations are necessary, and there are no appropriation limits on increases in federal borrowing. The creation of the Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan program in 1992 paved the way for a significant increase in debt levels for all students, particularly independent undergraduate and graduate students. That program is less costly to the federal government than the subsidized Stafford Loan program, but more expensive for students because it does not pay students' loan interest while they are in school.

Even more ominously, loans are increasingly being taken out by students for whom they were never intended, i.e., the neediest and the most at-risk. The gradual shift from grant aid to loan aid that policymakers pledged to reverse in 1992 has instead accelerated in the direction of more borrowing.

Unfortunately, student and parent use of consumer debt and alternative private loan programs is also increasing rapidly, as lenders market loans to families and students for whom federal grants and existing loan limits in federal programs are not sufficient. In the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, there will be pressure for increased loan limits, particularly for first-year students. An increase in freshman loan limits in the subsidized Stafford program would, however, be very costly under federal budget rules. Therefore, there may be pressure for an increase in the Unsubsidized Stafford program, so that students and families at least have recourse to the lower interest rates and more flexible repayment options in the federal loan programs.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will work actively in each legislative cycle to increase grants and minimize the need for student borrowing, and to assure that any increases in federal loan limits are accompanied by low interest rates and flexible repayment options for students.

Loan Program Structure: Implications for Repayment

The 1998 HEA reauthorization maintained the two currently available federal loan programs:

- The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan program, which uses federal capital for loans; and
- The Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program, which provides government-guaranteed private loans.

AASCU's main concern is to ensure institutional and student choice in the loan system. The ability of institutions to decide which of the two loan programs best serves their students has injected a measure of market competition into the system, and has prompted the loan industry and the Department of Education to improve quality of service as a means of attracting institutions. The loan consolidation program in direct lending allows borrowers to "refinance" their guaranteed loans into the direct loan program in repayment, thereby providing access to income-contingent repayment if needed.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU advocates the continued availability of both direct and government-guaranteed loans, based on school choice on the front end, and based on borrower choice upon entry into repayment. AASCU will advocate appropriate improvements that would render these programs more beneficial to borrowers and less cumbersome for institutions. In addition, the association will oppose all efforts to undermine either program by opposing all legislative and regulatory provisions that would impose artificial disadvantages on the efficient operation of each.

Terms and Conditions

Because of the increasing reliance on student loans, especially by those students most at risk financially, AASCU is committed to working for borrower terms and conditions in the federal loan programs that protect the interests of students and their families.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU advocates the elimination of all up-front fees for borrowers in both loan programs. The association will voice strong support for all legislative efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate this hidden tax on students.

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AASCU will continue to advocate for low-interest-rate student loans, and will oppose any efforts to increase the cost of educational borrowing. AASCU will continue its efforts to obtain the best possible interest rate on consolidation loans, and will pursue federal policies that provide the broadest set of consolidation options for borrowers.

AASCU is committed to improving repayment options in both federal loan programs, and is supportive of income-contingent repayment as an option in the direct loan program. The loan industry should be encouraged to offer innovative repayment plans in the federal guaranteed loan program, subject to basic consumer protection measures to ensure that borrowers are not burdened with excessive negative amortization.

Federal Subsidies to Lenders

Currently, the HEA guarantees lenders in the FFEL program a rate of return that is significantly higher than the interest rate paid by students. The federal payments providing this higher rate of return (called special allowance payments) are entitlements to lenders. Under the statute, special allowance payments will no longer be paid on new guaranteed loans after 2003.

Lenders are calling for the law to be changed in the next HEA reauthorization to allow the continuation of these payments on new loans. Because the FFEL program is an entitlement, or mandatory program, such a change in law would be subject to the "pay go" requirement of federal budget rules. Pay-go requires that a statutory change to reduce spending in another federal entitlement program be made to offset the continuation of the special allowance payments to lenders. Based on interest rate and volume assumptions at the time of reauthorization, the offset required could total $5 billion to $10 billion for the period covered by the new reauthorization statute.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to object to proposals to finance lender subsidies that either reduce benefits or increase costs to students.

Gatekeeping, Accreditation, and Program Integrity

The current framework for ensuring program integrity in federal student aid programs has evolved over the three decades of the programs' existence, and consists of a patchwork of statutory and regulatory provisions that were often created in response to specific problems. There are a large number of federal provisions in statute and regulation aimed at strengthening program integrity and curbing waste, fraud, and abuse.

AASCU strongly advocates for a reduction in the number and scope of federal regulations. AASCU believes that the current "one size fits all" approach to gatekeeping and oversight should be replaced by a system of equitable and appropriate regulation of participating institutions by type and control. Such an approach would allow the Department of Education to focus its limited enforcement resources on problem schools, and alleviate the unnecessary burdens imposed on other institutions.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU advocates the retention of the federal requirement that all institutions be accredited as a condition of participating in Title IV programs. Voluntary accreditation has proven to be an important safeguard against abuse in the case of traditional colleges and universities. AASCU will continue to support the Council on Higher Education Accreditation's efforts to ensure that accreditation remains voluntary.

AASCU will work with the Congress, other members of the higher education community, and with student and consumer advocacy groups to ensure that program integrity provisions are streamlined and strengthened. Specifically, the use of accreditation coupled with appropriate program performance criteria would be preferable to the current pattern of micro-management of institutions by the federal government.

AASCU will advocate the removal of regulatory and statutory obstacles to student eligibility for federal aid for non-traditional programs, including distance learning, and the streamlining of the delivery of aid for these programs.

Performance Based Organization for Student Aid Management

The HEA reauthorization made major changes to the structure of the Department of Education with the creation of a new Performance Based Organization (PBO) within the Department for the management of student financial assistance. The PBO is an important concern for the association, as is the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE). OPE is separate from the PBO and is headed by the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, who oversees policy development for all higher education programs and the operation of non-student aid programs.

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AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will closely monitor the efforts of the PBO in modernizing the delivery system, as well as the interaction between the PBO and OPE, whose functions are often difficult to separate.

Federal/State Issues

Leveraging Education Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) Program

Formerly known as the State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG) program, LEAP provides a relatively small but important incentive for states to maintain or bolster their need-based grant efforts. In recent years, a number of federal policymakers have questioned the continued need for the program, pointing out that nearly every state now has a need-based grant program and that states have substantially increased their need-based spending since the start of the SSIG program. The vast majority of state-level need-based spending, however, is concentrated in a handful of states, and it is possible that a number of states would scale back or even discontinue their need-based aid efforts in the absence of the federal matching funds provided via LEAP.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will work to maintain or increase funding for the LEAP program, and will oppose efforts to scale back or discontinue it.

State Issues

Trends in State Student Aid

State efforts to provide financial aid to college students have evolved considerably over the relatively short time that states have been a significant player in the financial aid arena. In particular, the last decade has been marked by the emergence of a "new generation" of state student aid programs, which emphasize academic merit over financial need and envision a significant role for the state tax code in providing assistance to college students. As colleges and universities that have historically been charged with preserving access to higher education opportunity at the state level, AASCU institutions stand to be especially impacted by a broad-scale philosophical shift regarding state student aid.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU believes that states should establish and maintain grant and scholarship programs that balance the desire to reward the academically talented with the very real need to provide higher education opportunity to the economically disadvantaged and other historically underrepresented groups. Additionally, states should create programs that meet their particular policy objectives, and guard against the temptation to import program models that are not organic to their unique policy landscapes. AASCU further believes that providing substantial financial benefits to students who do not need them is an inefficient use of scarce state resources, and questions the use of scholarship financing mechanisms that tend to rely disproportionately on lower-income citizens.

Tax Policy

Over the past several years, tax policy at both the state and federal levels has assumed a more prominent place in the operations of colleges and universities and in the lives of the students and families they serve. The use of the tax code has recently become a focal point of financial aid programming, and policymakers are just beginning to grapple with the challenges of calibrating their revenue structures and spending priorities to meet the demands of an unfolding economy.

In light of these developments, state colleges and universities must ensure that basic federal and state commitments to higher education are not compromised. While tax credits and deductions for college tuition may be favored by policymakers as a tool for assisting students and their families, the potential implications for access and administrative burden on institutions cannot be ignored. Similarly, while innovation and entrepreneurship should be encouraged in the area of electronic commerce, states must maintain a revenue base that permits colleges and universities to keep tuition as low as possible. In short, AASCU institutions will explore new opportunities in higher education-related tax policy, provided that they are not pursued at the expense of time-honored policy commitments.

Federal Issues

HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits

The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 significantly expanded the role of the federal tax code in aiding students by offering tax credits for the payment of qualified higher education

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expenses. These programs, which represent more than $7 billion a year in tax expenditures, raise concerns on two fronts:

Prioritization of Aid Efforts

AASCU has not supported the use of tax incentives as a means of federal student aid delivery. Using the tax code as a vehicle for student financial assistance tends to benefit students from middle and upper income families, who are already more likely to attend college.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for changes in the HOPE and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits that will make them more accessible to the neediest students (i.e. refundability). Additionally, AASCU will continue to push for financial aid programs that more directly benefit the neediest students (i.e. Pell Grants) as a higher policy priority, as opposed to additional tax credits and deductions.

Program Administration/Reporting

The HOPE and Lifetime Learning programs also impose a significant administrative burden on state colleges and universities. Current protocols require institutions to generate payment records for all students, regardless of their eligibility for the credits. Moreover, institutions are required to collect tax information from students and their families under the terms of this program, a task for which most institutions are not–and should not have to be–equipped.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to pursue the repeal of the current administrative and reporting provisions of the HOPE and Lifetime Learning programs, which are onerous and impractical. At the same time, AASCU will work with Congress and the executive branch to create an administrative structure for these programs that maximizes the benefits for students and their families and reduces the administrative burden on colleges and universities.

Student Loan Interest Deduction

In recent years, student and family borrowing to finance postsecondary education has risen dramatically, and this trend shows no sign of slowing in the foreseeable future. AASCU believes that providing relief for this growing burden, especially for the neediest borrowers, should be a priority for federal policymakers.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will actively support efforts to lift the existing 60-month cap on the federal tax deductibility of student loan interest.

Loan Forgiveness

Income-contingent student loan repayment was developed to help low-income borrowers honor their debt obligations instead of lapsing into default. Current tax policy, however, penalizes participants in this program by treating the amount of any loan forgiveness as taxable income. This policy is counter-productive to the objective of providing an incentive for at-risk borrowers to repay their loans.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will continue to advocate for a federal tax exemption for loan forgiveness proceeds for borrowers in the income-contingent repayment program.

Taxation of Employee Educational Assistance

The rapidly unfolding information economy entails a significant change in workforce education and training needs. Government policies should therefore provide incentives for both employers and employees to address these ongoing needs.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will advocate for a permanent extension of federal tax code provisions (i.e. Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code) that exempt employer-provided tuition benefits from federal taxation, as well as for the reinstatement of those benefits for graduate education.

Tax Provisions Affecting Charitable Giving

Because state colleges and universities are increasingly turning to private funding sources to support their basic operations and infrastructure, tax provisions related to charitable giving recently have assumed a higher policy profile. Federal laws and regulations should be coordinated so that they enable taxpayers (personal and corporate) to give to the institution(s) of their choice, free of direct or indirect disincentives.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will support legislation that enables and encourages charitable giving to colleges and universities (such as the IRA Charitable Rollover Proposal), and will oppose measures that explicitly or implicitly discourage such giving (i.e., estate tax adjustments).

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State Issues

Taxation of Electronic Commerce

The evolution of the Internet and the advent of electronic commerce (e-commerce) pose a wealth of opportunities for businesses and consumers, but at the same time entail significant risks for state revenue systems because of existing judicial opinions relative to the taxability of remote transactions. Consequently, states (especially those that are heavily dependent on sales and use taxes) stand to lose billions of dollars of revenue, which will adversely impact discretionary funding items such as higher education. A number of policymakers, concerned about stunting the growth of the burgeoning e-commerce industry, have expressed an interest in permanently banning the taxation of Internet sales.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU believes that states should carefully assess the potential revenue implications of shielding e-commerce from taxation before considering any ban of such taxation. Additionally, AASCU encourages state policymakers to view this issue as an opportunity to examine their states' revenue systems in light of developing economic and demographic trends, and to consider adjustments that may be necessary to maintain a stable funding base for essential public services such as higher education.

Teacher Preparation, Development, and Support

Reform efforts to improve the teaching and learning of children appropriately encompass a full range of initiatives. The success of these efforts is based on multiple measures and indicators, including the criteria used to measure successful teaching. The quality preparation of America's teachers is of foremost concern to AASCU members, as AASCU institutions educate a majority of the nation's undergraduate students who are preparing for a career in teaching.

Federal Issues

As with student financial aid, AASCU's involvement with teaching and learning policy at the federal level entails three processes: authorization, appropriation and regulation.

Authorization

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), scheduled to be reauthorized in the 107th Congress, provides an opportunity to improve the full spectrum of P - 16 education. This Act establishes a vehicle for continuation of partnerships created by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, and is an opportunity to maintain the seamless link that encompasses pre-service, induction, and in-service professional development.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU supports the inclusion of authorizing language in ESEA to create partnerships that require the participation of institutions of higher education (IHEs) in continuing education and professional development activities with their local school districts (LEAs).

Appropriation

The majority of funding for LEA/higher education partnerships falls in the federal domestic discretionary budget. The benefits from these federally established partnerships will accrue only if the programs receive sufficient financial support through the annual appropriation process.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will seek increased appropriations for programs that improve and expand teacher preparation and partnership programs, including teacher training in technology, science and math preparation, and other long-term professional development initiatives.

Regulation

Appropriate regulation is crucial to fulfilling the spirit of the law. AASCU's involvement in the development of regulations to implement teacher preparation accountability standards in the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 is an example of this activity.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU believes that participation in the regulatory process is imperative to incorporate the needs and interests of public colleges and universities into regulations, and will seek involvement in the development of regulations required to implement school reforms and partnership activities.

AASCU will seek the adoption of accountability standards in ESEA to reflect those created in the Higher Education Act to establish a complete picture of the state of American education.

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Federal/State Issues

Teacher Shortages/Incentives/Retention

As many as two million new teachers are estimated to be needed during the next decade to replenish the upcoming retirement of baby boom era teachers. An increased number of available teachers will also help to counter the high rate of teacher attrition and the declining number of students entering the teaching profession. This teacher shortage is further exacerbated by new policy initiatives to reduce class size.

Policymakers must recognize the importance of supply and demand dynamics in the teaching profession, and craft policies that increase supply. These actions should address all teacher shortages, but particularly those in high-need areas (both geographic–rural and urban–and subject matter shortages).

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU recommends adoption of federal legislation enacting loan forgiveness and other incentives to hire and retain quality teachers in high need school districts, and to increase the numbers of teachers from underrepresented and non-traditional teaching populations.

AASCU supports the study and adoption of innovative, market-driven economic models to address teacher shortage and retention issues.

AASCU supports efforts to discover and examine characteristics of successful teachers, the manner in which students learn, and the most effective organization of classrooms and schools. These initiatives should work to effectively close performance gaps, improve teacher preparation, and aid in retention.

AASCU encourages bold and immediate action to improve working conditions for teachers, including: higher salaries, greater involvement in setting curriculum and other decision-making, and improved professional development opportunities. Additionally, AASCU believes that greater interstate mobility of certified teachers should be encouraged through means such as reciprocal licensing agreements and the use of portable pension plans.

Accountability and Standards

Strict accountability measures for schools of teacher preparation are a fundamental element of current reform efforts. The recent federal requirement to publish report cards that compare the pass rates of teacher preparation programs is an outgrowth of the education accountability movement. Additional public disclosure initiatives are also being adopted in many states and school districts.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU supports the establishment and implementation of rigorous, state-determined standards of learning, the accomplishment of which signify that a specific level of proficiency has been attained. These standards should measure specific content area comprehension, knowledge of appropriate methods of instruction, and the connectivity of these two areas. States that wish to incorporate national standards, such as those promoted by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Council for Basic Education, and various discipline-based associations into their curricula and measurement structures should have the option to do so.

AASCU endorses public accountability and disclosure of the qualifications of teachers employed in local school districts to assist public knowledge of the qualifications of the nation's teaching force.

Induction/Professional Development Partnerships/P – 16 Councils

The broad geographic reach of AASCU institutions affords them prime opportunities to partner with their local school districts and communities. This proximity of location also facilitates the establishment of long-term relationships through learning modules. The formation of P - 16 councils assists in the transition of students from one level of learning to the next.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU believes that the retention of certified, quality teachers is aided by institutional partnerships with states, school districts, and local schools, by implementing long-term, directed professional development and by establishing P – 16 councils.

Technology/Clinical Experience

Technology and clinical experience are frequently required for adequate classroom preparation and are often incorporated into the curriculum of teacher preparation programs. The increasing number of classes offered through distance education is a clear indication of the growing importance and availability of technology. More clinical experiences have also been established to provide the foundation for

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expanding the role of research in the preparation of teachers and the measurement of student achievement.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU supports increasing the opportunity for technological innovations and clinical experiences to be incorporated into the preparation of teachers.

State Issues

Alternative Routes to Certification/Out-of-Field and Uncertified Placement

As teacher shortages mount in many areas, policymakers are increasingly turning to alternative means to supply teachers for classrooms. These alternative routes to certification vary significantly in quality and rigor. A growing number of teachers with temporary or emergency certification, or those teaching out of field, however, are being assigned to instruct students, particularly in students poor or low-performing school districts who can least afford or counter such deficiencies. These hiring practices contribute to teacher attrition and deprive children of what the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future articulated as the right of every child–that of a caring, competent, and qualified teacher.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU recognizes the need for alternative means of teacher certification, but believes alternative certification programs should be conducted according to rigorous standards of accountability consistent with those employed for teachers prepared in traditional settings. AASCU strongly opposes the practice of out-of-field and emergency, uncertified teacher placement. AASCU further believes that states should provide disincentives for local districts and individual schools to engage in this practice.

Global Responsibilities and Priorities

In order for the graduates of AASCU institutions to be fully prepared to compete successfully in the global economy of the 21st century, it is necessary for them to have a broad understanding of the world, including an in-depth knowledge of other languages and cultures. AASCU must recognize and become involved in select educational international policy initiatives and funding opportunities. Working in close cooperation with international counterpart organizations, coalitions, and alliances, AASCU will explore ways to develop a presence before federal, state, and regional entities in matters associated with international education policies and programs, particularly those that benefit member institutions and their students, faculty, and administrators. The enactment of the International Opportunities Act of 2000, which authorized funds to assist students of limited financial means to study abroad, is one example of AASCU's legislative priority for international policy initiatives. Recent legislation that exempted higher education from the H-1B visa cap on foreign faculty conducting research or teaching in the U. S. is another example of association advocacy.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU's policy focus for international programs will center on those activities that create (1) new opportunities for students from AASCU campuses to study or to work abroad through internships and other programs; (2) new opportunities for faculty and administrators from AASCU campuses to study or conduct research abroad; (3) increased opportunities for AASCU campuses to host students and faculty from abroad for study, research and teaching; and (4) enhanced foreign language and area studies offerings.

Federal Issues

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU will encourage the development of and support for authority in federal legislation that gives fiscal priority to programs that facilitate student, faculty, and administrator exchanges and study abroad.

AASCU will also advocate for legislation and regulations that streamline the visa process for students, faculty, and administrators and achieve the elimination or reduction of burdensome federal regulations that hinder the successful development of international programs.

AASCU will continue to actively participate in the Coalition for International Education, which supports legislation and increased appropriation for three important international programs managed by the Department of Education: Title VI, Fulbright-Hays, and the Institute for International Public Policy.

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Science/Research and Information Technology

AASCU institutions will play an essential role in providing the requisite science and technology education for a competitive workforce in the global economy of the 21st Century.

Federal Issues

Authorization

The legislation authorizing the National Science Foundation (NSF) is scheduled to be reauthorized by the 107th Congress. The NSF was created by Congress in 1950 to promote the progress of science; advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense.

Appropriations

AASCU will advocate for funding increases for undergraduate research and education programs in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology across the federal agencies.

Regulation

The Internal Revenue Service is considering issuing guidance that would clarify the application of the Internal Revenue Code to the use of the Internet by tax exempt organizations. AASCU will participate in the regulatory process and provide guidance to the IRS.

Science Research and Education

In the higher education arena, science policy has been commonly viewed in the context of research and graduate education at major research universities. Yet, as our economy and society become increasingly dependent upon information and knowledge, the need for all of our citizenry to be well-educated in the sciences will continue to grow. Therefore, AASCU members must be engaged in science research education policy. Additionally, as the higher education providers with a significant responsibility for preparation the nation's educators, AASCU institutions have a special stake in the nation's science education policy.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU believes that policymakers must recognize the contributions of each sector of the higher education community when making policy decisions concerning science and mathematics research, education, and information technology. The resources of the entire higher education community must be tapped when gathering and using data, establishing advisory boards, and creating and implementing science, mathematics, engineering, and technology programs.

AASCU believes that the federal government must play a stronger role in funding activities to support and improve scientific research and education activities at the undergraduate level.

AASCU will advocate for increased funding for programs that address faculty and curriculum enhancements, instrumentation, undergraduate research, teacher preparation, and programs to recruit non-traditional students into the sciences.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU will work to ensure that the reauthorization of the NSF will strengthen the NSF's commitment to science and mathematics teacher preparation, undergraduate education, and increasing the numbers of women and minorities in the sciences.

AASCU strongly supports the recommendations included in the NSF report entitled *Shaping the Future: New Expectations for Undergraduate Education in Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology*. In particular, AASCU supports the call for a doubling of NSF's undergraduate programs funding by 2006.

AASCU strongly supports the Division of Undergraduate Education of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and will oppose any efforts to eliminate it.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU believes that that the NIH should take a more active role in undergraduate research and education. To this end, AASCU will advocate for increases in funding for the Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) program and support efforts to establish new opportunities for undergraduate research and education.

Agricultural Research

The role of agricultural research in scientific advancement is critical. From the developing arenas of genetically modified organisms and the human genome project to the established studies of animal science, soil analysis, and

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entomology, agricultural research provides a foundation for further scientific analysis.

AASCU members, particularly the AASCU members of its affiliate association, the American Association of State Colleges of Agriculture and Renewable Resources (AASCARR), play an ever-increasing role in agricultural research. Several AASCU members have expanded their agricultural research departments to include the emerging disciplines of viticulture and enology, as well as equine studies.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU supports legislation that further broadens the accessibility of agricultural research funds to all colleges and universities with departments of agriculture, renewable resources, and related disciplines, and will support increased funding for these programs.

Applied Research

AASCU institutions are capable of providing research opportunities in a wide array of special areas such as applied research in teacher preparation to discover and examine characteristics of successful teachers, the manner in which students learn, and the most effective organization of classrooms and schools.

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU's advocacy activities will seek to expand federal support for applied research funding among a wide array of federal agencies that will benefit institutions and the students they serve.

Information Technology

As developers and purveyors of knowledge and information, colleges and universities cannot simply follow trends in information technology; they must be at the leading edge of those trends. Accordingly, public policy related to information technology, intellectual property, and related topics must recognize the special responsibilities and challenges that higher education institutions face in the unfolding Information Age.

In order for colleges and universities to provide real-time video streaming distance education over the Internet and for students to view these courses, both institutions and students must have access to high-speed networks. Access to broadband networks will also permit faculty and students at one institution to use equipment at another institution.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU will advocate for the expansion of current programs or the creation of new programs to assist non-Internet2 institutions gain access to high-speed networks, and will support efforts by the Federal Communications Commission and the Congress to encourage the telecommunications industry to provide broadband services to a greater percentage of consumers so that students will have access to these networks at their homes.

AASCU will advocate for increased funding for the Learning Anytime, Anywhere Partnerships program administered by the Department of Education and the Technology Opportunities Program administered by the Department of Commerce.

Students and faculty must continue to have access to copyrighted materials with the advent of digital technologies. AASCU will support efforts to update the copyright law to fully reflect the growing use of digital technologies in higher education.

AASCU will continue to participate in the Higher Education Alliance for Information Technology, to ensure that higher education is properly represented in decision making process on information technology policy.

State Issues

Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act (UCITA)

The rapid evolution of a technology-driven and information based economy brings a wealth of economic and cultural opportunities. At the same time, this evolution poses unprecedented challenges for economic relationships and legal systems rooted in the exchange of traditional goods. As state policymakers make their way in the e-world, it is essential that they do so in a manner that recognizes new realities without compromising time-tested principles.

The Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act (UCITA) is a prime example of this imperative. UCITA is a piece of state legislation recommended for adoption by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, and is designed to bring uniformity to state contract law provisions governing electronic transactions. UCITA is a broad and complex measure, covering several areas of interest to state colleges and universities, including:

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- License and Copyright
- Contract Formation and Procurement
- Electronic Self-Help (ability of vendors to remotely discontinue service to contract violators)
- Reverse Engineering (capture of electronic program design information from purchased product's code)

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU believes that UCITA, as offered to the states, represents a potential threat to existing public policies essential to the higher education enterprise and the students it serves. The areas in which UCITA represent a potential risk include:

Copyright (fair use and first sale), which is essential to the academic endeavors of institutions; and

Contract formation, which could adversely affect consumer protections afforded to faculty, staff, and students.

Accordingly, AASCU urges state policymakers to include appropriate recognition and protection of these policies as part of any deliberation or adoption of UCITA.

Access and Inclusion

AASCU institutions have always promoted accessibility and affordability as a means of offering opportunity and social mobility for all Americans. To that end, AASCU institutions have opened their doors to traditionally underrepresented students, immigrants, and many first-generation college students. As the sweeping changes of technological advances and economic globalization overtake our nation and world, it is imperative that our national energies are collectively focused on optimally developing human and intellectual capital from all segments of our society.

Federal Issues

AASCU supports the concept of affirmative action using judiciously accepted approaches to achieve the goals of access and inclusion. For more than a generation, the federal government has developed and pursued policies designed to expand the promise of higher education to a greater number of Americans.

While these efforts have paid off many times over in terms of lives changed, the challenges of providing higher education opportunity to an even more diverse student population lie ahead. Accordingly, it is imperative that federal policymakers preserve and expand those programs that have proven their worth, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship to breathe life into initiatives that may be flagging.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU will advocate for increased federal funding to support public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).

AASCU will advocate for continued funding of the TRIO and GEAR UP programs, as well as an expansion of those programs to reach community-based institutions and other groups that serve students. The TRIO programs have a proven record of reaching out to junior and senior high school students who would not otherwise aspire to higher education.

AASCU will advocate for the retention of and increased funding for the current Title IX fellowship and training programs. Additional support should go to the most promising students and the most productive departments. These programs should also allow for a more equitable funding distribution between two-year and four-year institutions.

AASCU supports the creation of specific funding lines in the budgets of the Department of Education and the Department of Labor to publicize the importance of post-secondary education in long-term career planning, the availability of student aid, and the need for completing certain high school requirements.

AASCU will advocate for increases in funding for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program. Institutions of higher education can use funds under this program to support or establish campus-based childcare programs that primarily serve the needs of low-income students who receive Pell Grants.

Although rural and urban higher education issues are often viewed in sharp contrast, these sectors share many of the same concerns, such as access and retention. AASCU will continue to advocate for assistance for the special needs of both these sectors, while exploring the possibility of collaborative programs and funding sources that could address their shared needs.

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Federal/State Issues

As the face of federalism continues to evolve in the United States, it is vitally important that policy imperatives such as the promotion of opportunity not become casualties of such an evolution. Accordingly, federal policymakers need to engage in a productive dialogue with their state counterparts regarding policy priorities for educational opportunity.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU encourages the creation of cooperative state and federal government initiatives involving TRIO to address incompatibilities in remediation that exist between K-12 schools and higher education institutions.

AASCU will promote an examination of the process of collection and analysis of data concerning retention, and continue to identify useful models for improving retention. Additionally, AASCU seeks to work with the National Retention Advisory Panel (NRAP) and others to identify why minority students who graduate from two-year programs transfer to four-year programs at a below average rate.

AASCU believes that state and federal initiatives should strengthen existing teaching, research and service programs at public colleges and universities for minority students, non-native-English-speaking students, and target funding for programs that increase participation of students with disabilities and minority students.

AASCU urges state and federal policymakers to explore new ways to use student aid to improve transfer rates from two-year institutions to four-year institutions, especially among minority students.

State Issues

While the federal government has historically been most prominently identified with efforts to promote access and inclusion in higher education, state governments are assuming an ever-increasing role in this arena. As such, it is crucial that state policymakers turn their attention to these issues.

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU encourages states to review programs that benefit students who shift from two-year to four-year institutions, and to publicize any innovative or especially effective state transfer articulation agreements.

AASCU encourages states to develop programs that promote college preparation and attendance at the elementary and secondary levels, with a special emphasis on historically disadvantaged and underrepresented populations. Support for these programs, however, should supplement and not supplant any existing program funding, and should work in concert with existing federal programs (e.g. TRIO, GEAR-UP, etc.).

Economic and Workforce Development

Since their inception, AASCU institutions have played an integral role in their states' workforce and economic development efforts. From their roots as normal schools and teachers' colleges at the opening of the 20th century, state colleges and universities have matured into vital community partners and leaders in applied research. As a new economy unfolds, however, it is clear that new methods and approaches will be required in the areas of economic and workforce development. In the face of these changes, AASCU institutions will be challenged to integrate their historical commitments to access and opportunity with unprecedented demands to form national, regional, state, and local partnerships to create new knowledge and solve unprecedented problems. At the same time, policymakers must recognize the need to review and revise policy to accommodate the changes now underway in the economy.

Federal Issues

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will explore programmatic partnerships with federal agencies to promote education, training, and research opportunities that will benefit institutions and the students they serve. These agencies include the Departments of Labor, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Small Business Administration.

Federal/State Issues

AASCU Policy Statement

AASCU will seek the adoption of federal and state policies that facilitate the cultivation of the human capital

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represented by those currently receiving welfare benefits. Specifically, AASCU will advocate for increasing the allowable time limits under which welfare recipients can pursue higher education as a countable work activity. Additionally, AASCU will call on federal and state policymakers to provide adequate financial aid for welfare recipients who want to pursue higher education.

State Issues

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU encourages states to promote partnerships between government agencies, colleges and universities, and the private sector, particularly in areas related to the provision of technical assistance to businesses and entrepreneurs in the state.

AASCU urges state policymakers to review current laws and regulations pertaining to economic and workforce development (e.g. conflict of interest, intellectual property, contracting) to ensure that these policies do not unduly impede entrepreneurship and business development, particularly with respect to faculty and staff at colleges and universities.

Governance

The principle of lay governance serves as one of the cornerstones of public higher education in the United States. The vitality and adaptability of state colleges and universities amid the dramatic change of the past century is due in part to the vision and leadership of citizens entrusted with the coordination and governance of these institutions. Lay governance is a crucial but fragile enterprise, one that is necessary for the cultivation of responsive and engaged institutions, but one that is increasingly vulnerable to misappropriation by narrow political and ideological factions. As AASCU institutions strive to meet the demands of the 21st Century, the bodies overseeing these institutions must recognize these demands and revisit governance structures and relationships where necessary.

State Issues

AASCU Policy Statements

AASCU believes that service on a higher education governing or coordinating board is a vital public trust, one that therefore requires extreme care in member selection and continuing education. The nomination/selection process for board members should be based solely on the qualifications of the individual, and the process should involve consultation of key stakeholders. Additionally, policymakers and the higher education community must be prepared to provide comprehensive orientation for board members as they assume their duties, and continuing education for them as they strive to carry out those duties.

AASCU encourages the formation and maintenance of appropriate and constructive relationships between institutions, their governing and coordinating entities, and states' elected leaders. Changes in these relationships that politicize the decision-making process or compromise the autonomy or integrity of institutions are detrimental to the educational enterprise and to the public trust.

AASCU believes that governing and coordinating boards as essential components of the higher education enterprise, exist to:

Provide overall direction and guidance to institutions;

Ensure good stewardship of the public's investment in these institutions; and

Advocate for their particular institutions and for higher education in general to the people of the state.

Accordingly, AASCU discourages extensive involvement of governing and coordinating boards in the operational affairs of institutions. AASCU believes that such involvement robs institutions of strategic focus and direction, and compromises the professional respect and sense of shared purpose that is necessary for a constructive board-institution relationship.

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